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Evangelical Visitor - September 10, 1980 Vol. XCIII. No. 17.

Glen A. Pierce

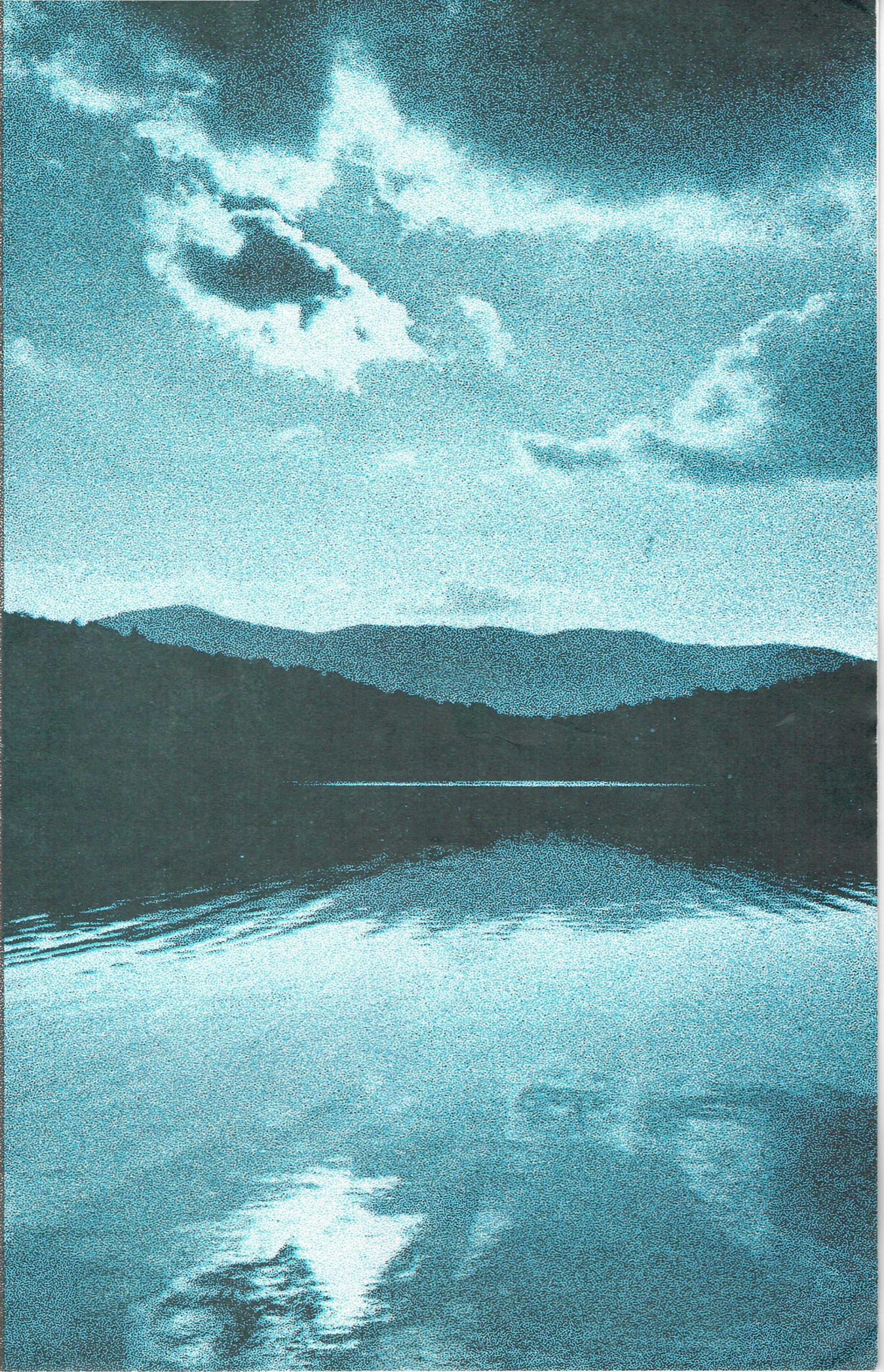
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Evangelical VISITOR

September 10, 1980



PREVIEW

In this issue . . . Bishop John Byers talks about the meaning of being the people of God (p. 3). Two respected international church leaders, Billy Graham and John Stott, wrestle with the need for a biblical response to nuclear weapons (p. 4). Elsie Bechtel introduces us to a dynamic Nicaraguan missionary (p. 9). And Warren Hoffman reports on a Christian education seminar in New Mexico (p. 12). Plus a stewardship challenge, church news and missionary testimonies.

And in the September 25 issue . . . thoughts on "Paying the Price of a Growing Vision," an article asserting that "Everyone Needs a Hug," and some of the responses from readers to the recent article on "Evangelicals and Feminism." Sample copies of this issue will be available in congregations as a means of introducing the *Visitor* to persons who are not yet subscribers.

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Evangelical Visitor

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Letters to the Editor

More on the role of a pastor's wife

I write in response to a letter printed in the July 10 issue concerning the role of a pastor's wife—if indeed it is a "role." I do not see it as a role nor do I understand why a person cannot share the spouse's life and still feel fulfilled and free. After all, why marry if one does not want to be part of another's life?

Let me be very personal. My husband is a preacher, teacher, administrator, while I am an interior decorator, farmer, and gardener. In my husband's work he travels a good deal, attends many meetings, camp meetings, travels throughout the church world. I have become a very active part of that life although I find camp meeting seats very hard and tiring, nor do I find putting together the General Conference Minutes the great love of my life.

However, Arthur cuts up the wood, helps to harvest the garden, even cleans the house, feeds the chickens—all of which are definitely not his cup of tea! We have both found this mix, however, very rewarding, quite amusing at times, and a full and fulfilling life altogether. When we stretch a bit out of our own realm and interest, we have found not only growth in our outlook but in spiritual blessing.

When we chose each other with the blessing of the Holy Spirit, we accepted each others' lives and what it meant to be a supportive spouse.

—Lona Climenhaga
Ashland, Ohio

I write in response to Wanda Thuma-McDermond's letter in the July 10 *Visitor*. I think I understand what Wanda is opposing: the molding of the pastor's wife into a preconceived figure. I also detest anything that only sees position and not people. I commend Wanda for seeking to awaken the church leadership to her personal feelings and aspirations.

I was very much disturbed, however, as I reread the article, "The Blessings of Being a Pastor's Wife" (April 10 *Visitor*), to which Wanda reacted. The author of that article is praising the Lord for the *opportunities to minister* that have come her way as a pastor's wife. She is counting it a blessing to be in such a position where people with hurts can receive a vital ministry from the Lord through her.

The pastorate is *not* a profession—neither is being a pastor's wife—it is a *ministry*. It is an avenue of service to God's people. The call of the Lord of the Church is to make ourselves available to serve one another in love. Pastor's wife, praise the Lord for the opportunities to serve afforded by virtue of your husband's ministerial office, for service is the lifeblood of *all* Christians. And continue to speak to the church about the unreasonable expectations placed upon you, but speak specifically and humbly so that you are not misunderstood.

I don't deny Wanda her right to express herself. However, I am concerned that in so expressing herself, she has not torn down bridges on which someone needed to walk in their search for help. Never let it be said by a pastor, pastor's wife, or *any* Christian, that they are not available to minister.

—Gilbert Gomez
New Paris, Indiana

Evangelical Visitor

In "Pilgrimage: A Pageant about The Brethren in Christ," written and produced by Norman Bert for our 200th Anniversary, the question is asked, "Who are the Brethren in Christ?" Part of one of the responses is, "We are the people of God." We believe that and say a hearty amen to the truth. However, as we affirm the truth we must be careful not to ignore its meaning.

What does it mean to be "a people"? Missionaries speak of "the tribes people." Residents of a fishing community are referred to as "people of the sea." Then there are "the rich people" and "the poor people." Each one of these people have characteristics which are distinct to them.

Since we are the people of God, what does that mean in a practical way? It does more than identify our traits; it describes our purpose and thereby speaks to our actions.

God's people are a people of privilege and responsibility. To ignore one or the other is to not be all that God intends.

The people of God enjoy the blessing of belonging. To feel that one belongs to someone is a primary need of every human. Becoming one of God's people places us in the community of the kingdom. It makes us a part of a group of people who care about one another and share the same purpose in life.

I remember attending a large family gathering after having lived for a period of years away from our relatives. The immediate response of our children was, "Daddy, are all these

Being the People of God

John A. Byers

people related to us?" In the years that have followed they have enjoyed the association with these relatives and gained a new sense of identity. God's people are related. We are brothers and sisters and the fellowship of the community brings the joy of identification. Our association with each other gives us a source for developing values. Certainly we must read the Scriptures but the living out of those truths is affected by those around us. Knowing that there are those who love and accept us gives a real sense of self worth. We feel and know that there are

others who believe in us. Thus we not only know God's will but can do it with joy.

But with these privileges come responsibilities. We can not enjoy care unless there is someone willing to care. Ministry is a mark of the people of God. Ministers are priests and the word 'priest' means a bridge-builder. It is heartwarming to know that as a priest we have direct access to God for our own needs. But if we are to be bridge-builders, we need to also build communications with others to bring them to God.

Ministry has opportunity for shortcuts. In reaching out to our community we can, as it were, dump the Gospel on them "Gospel Blimp style." That is not ministry, it is an annoyance. To minister effectively to those who are "not a people" we need to share with them at their level of interest and on their turf. It will mean coming out of the security and safety of our sacred walls and ministering wherever and whenever there is opportunity.

We also need to minister to each other. Most of us can tell of how another believer's prayer, encouraging word or kind deed spurred us on. I believe we do well in those areas, but what about corporate settings? Just

A most unusual General Conference report has come to our congregation. One not about business or food or lodging, but of the love one of our delegates found expressed in the brotherhood. It was a first time experience for her. She left home a stranger and returned with a whole family of brothers and sisters! Never had she felt such fellowship, seen so much hugging and kissing and the renewing of old friendships. Her enthusiasm spread through our membership.

Most of us being second or third generation members need to be aware of this heritage of love, we need to cherish it and be ready to welcome with open arms all new brothers and sisters who see us at work in conference for the first time. We earnestly pray that each delegate returns home with a feeling of unity, the tie that binds and holds us in love.

Mrs. Aurea Rickel
Alta Loma Brethren in Christ Church

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Being the People of God

from page 3

who ministers to whom in our worship services? Is it just the pastor? Would there be no difference if the pastor preached his sermon to each of us individually? If it is more than the pastor who ministers in a service and it does make a difference to have others present, then what happens when we sit in our pew sullen and withdrawn? What happens if we don't sit there at all? Are we not taking a shortcut in ministering to other brothers and sisters? God's people share together in worship.

The people of God are an obedient people. We should be a people ready to do what God asks while being surrounded with other attractive options. There is the awareness that God calls us to do as He wills, not as we wish.

The significance of obedience is seen in the fact that as God's people we are only pilgrims and strangers in this land. We are temporary residents. There is always the danger that when someone is sent on an errand to another country they will want to stay. That risk is very real to the Christian. We can come to like our safety, security, comfort and all the other pleasures of the earthly kingdom until we don't want to go home. It is obedience to the will of God that causes us to fast and pray, to go in service and to give of our resources to plant new churches and expand existing ones. It takes obedience.

The people of God are also ambassadors. It is interesting how a few people can give another country either a good or bad impression of their people. As God's people, the Brethren in Christ Church needs to give careful attention to our conduct and lifestyle. We want our communities to understand that we take God's Word seriously, that we seek to apply it effectively to life with a sensitivity to where people are. Yet regardless of what we believe, our communities will know us primarily by what they observe. We are responsible for how people feel about Christ and the church.

Being part of God's people is an indescribable pleasure. However, let us be certain that we are in fact being the people of God.

John A. Byers is Bishop of the Atlantic Conference.

Billy Graham

on

Within recent years two highly respected evangelical leaders, the American evangelist Billy Graham and the British preacher-teacher John R. W. Stott, have had a "change of heart" regarding nuclear weapons. They are of one mind as to the "insanity," "madness" and "horrendous reality" of the nuclear arms race and see that contest as very likely leading to a nuclear holocaust. Christians, they say, are to do something about this monstrous evil.

Both men base their thought on the Bible. Rev. Stott roots his view in the Sermon on the Mount beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called God's children." The verse moves him to write that "peacemaking is a divine activity," and thus, "the basis of peacemaking is theological: it derives from our doctrine of God." Billy Graham, after indicating that the matter of nuclear weapons is not only a political matter but also a moral and spiritual issue, affirms that Christ calls his followers to love and that discipleship means binding up wounds and bringing healing, not promoting the need and use of nuclear weapons.

The two evangelical leaders realize that God may use nuclear weapons in judgment, but the Almighty "delights in salvation and peacemaking" (Stott). Yes, vengeance is the work of God, but His eternal purpose is to save the lost. He is "not interested in destruction, but in redemption" (Graham), having

come to reverse the effects of the Fall. Nuclear weapons issue from the sinful heart; Christ came to rescue people from the inner bent to do violence. The conclusion is that God is opposed to nuclear weapons and that God's authentic children should be of the same mind.

As to the nature of the Christian response, the two evangelical leaders place central emphasis on the need of prayer. Prayer is to be not only for the leaders of one's own country but also for the helmsmen of other nations, especially the people in charge of enemy nations. Has not Christ commanded us to pray for our enemies? Stott poses the question as to what God's response would be if all Christians "were to unite in fervent, concentrated prayer for rulers, for enemies, for peace, freedom and justice in the world" (Stott). He implies that God would do great things. In the same vein, Graham states, "prayer is the Christian's most powerful weapon."

Further, Christians are to work for peace among nations. They cannot wash their hands of the matter as they are responsible to God. The temptation to feel helpless in the situation is to be resisted; let it ever be remembered that in times past evangelicals were in the vanguard of social movements (as in the case of slavery). To give up is to "part company with Christ," writes Stott. He continues by saying that "we need to join others in seeking to reverse the arms race."

Evangelical Visitor

and John Stott

Nuclear Weapons

More pointedly, Rev. Graham indicates, "Christians may well find themselves working and agreeing with non-believers on an issue like peace," albeit their motives will be different.

The two realize that nations will not suddenly lay down their arms. They know that the fulness of peace will not come before Christ's return. At the same time the fact that not all swords will be beaten into plough shares and spears into pruning hooks "cannot be made an excuse for building sword and spear factories." Christians need to perceive, Stott writes, that the prediction of future wars is not to inhibit Christians from seeking peace, no more than the foretelling of famine stops Christians from feeding the hungry. Peacemaking is a Christian responsibility and challenge.

In addition Christians, in the words of Billy Graham, are "to build bridges of understanding among nations." The followers of Christ must understand that they are global citizens. National loyalties are to be transcended, for "the kingdom of God is not the same as America."

It is highly significant that a major factor in shaping Billy's recent thinking was his evangelistic work behind the Iron Curtain. In countries like Yugoslavia and Poland, he found thriving Christian churches filled with people deeply concerned about peace. John Stott also calls for a view that moves beyond narrow nationalism. Christians are to evaluate national rivalries from their international point

of view. In regard to the Soviet Union and the United States, he penned these words: "each superpower perceives the other as a threat." The task of Christians on both sides is to support any means which will "reduce this confrontation of suspicion." "Confidence-building measures (CBMs)" define the challenge before Christians. Although something like fifteen to twenty percent of the Russians are Christians, "the links between American and Russian Christians are minimal." Stott's word to Christians in the two countries is that a strengthened fellowship could be influential in Soviet-American relations.

Neither of the two brethren counsel immediate, total unilateral disarmament. But both call for what Stott refers to as "unilateral gestures of disarmament." He gives two examples of such gestures: (1) trying to influence government to make a pledge that it will never be the first to use strategic nuclear weapons, and (2) calling on government to declare at least a temporary moratorium on the developing and testing of new nuclear weapons systems. Billy Graham has similar views as he calls on Christians to take risks in behalf of peace. They must do what is needed to strengthen the fragile relationship between Russia and the United States.

The two men make additional worthy points. The American evangelist believes that Christians must understand the issues and come to see that the nuclear arms race is an entirely new

factor in human history. The British Bible expositor calls for more public debate on the matter of nuclear weapons. He details the horrors of nuclear attack. According to the U.S. Congress document, *The Effects of Nuclear War*, (1979), a one megaton weapon attack on a city the size of Detroit or Leningrad would result in the death of up to two million people. In a large attack in which the USSR struck first and the United States responded, 77 percent of the Americans would die and 40 percent of the Russians would likewise perish. These figures do not include the millions that would die later. In light of these statistics, Stott declares, Christians need to hear the words of our Lord, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

Billy Graham states he is not a pacifist and Stott implies the same (the latter does believe that nuclear war is contrary to the just war concept and thus Christians should be nuclear pacifists). Yet with great clarity they see many of the issues surrounding the use of nuclear weapons.

Quotes and content of this article are from the following sources: John R. W. Stott, "Calling for Peacemakers in a Nuclear Age, Part I," Christianity Today, Feb. 8, 1980, pp. 44-45.

"Calling for Peacemakers in a Nuclear Age, Part II," Christianity Today, Mar. 7, 1980, pp. 44-45. "A Change of Heart, Billy Graham on the Nuclear Arms Race," Sojourners, Aug. 1979, pp. 12-14.

Martin Schrag is a member of the faculty of Messiah College.

Beyond Their Ability

by Allen Bowman

One of the finest Christians I have known had a problem with his giving to the church. His relatives worried about him. Even though he had only himself to support, they were sure he was going clear overboard. "Now, Grandpa," they would caution him before he went to annual conference, "don't go over there and give away everything you have."

But Grandpa wouldn't pay any attention. Joyfully he would "go overboard" as usual, and then return home more joyful than ever. It did seem that he gave extravagantly, but God supplied his needs.

His attitude reminds me of my own mother's policy—only her relatives didn't object. Married to a minister of very limited means, and herself unable to earn much, she gave to God's cause in a way that astonished me. Then she became a widow and had still smaller means of support. Any thought of looking to her two sons for help was the farthest thing from her mind. Living with amazing frugality, she gave endlessly. One day when a subscription for a church building project was launched, she made a donation so large that it nearly bowled me over. How could she do it?

Mother had planned at first to leave her little cottage to her boys; but after we got on our feet financially, she decided to give it to the Christian college near her home. The president of the school remonstrated with her, but to no avail. It was all right with Leon and me. How could we protest against such devotion as that?

Upon reading her will (she had appointed me the executor) I found that at her death she had enough in the bank for funeral expenses, plus \$1,200 or so designated for the cause of missions.

Her lawyer was a long-standing friend of the family. When he read the will, he was nonplussed. "She had already given enough," he sputtered. "You boys just divide the amount between you."

The suggestion was seemingly well meant—the worldly wise naturally felt that Mother had gone beyond bounds—but his idea struck me as almost blasphemous. How could I explain to him either Mother's generosity or the satisfaction I had in carrying out her wishes? He was like those relatives of the old gentleman: "Now, don't go and give away everything you have."

The Bible gives several examples of people who loved the Lord so much that they gave with that same abandon.

You will recall the poor widow who, as Jesus watched, threw a farthing into the treasury, "all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:41-44). The Master didn't condemn her giving. He actually commended it. He knew that her Heavenly Father would take good care of her. He himself, having given His all, never lacked the necessities of life. And He knew what joy that super-generous woman was experiencing.

Then there were those amazing Christians in Macedonia who contributed to the fund Paul was collecting for suffering believers in Judea. The apostle reported: "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability" (II Corinthians 8:2-3, NIV).

Beyond their ability? How could that be? At first thought it doesn't make sense. But that's the way it was.

Every age has seen instances of such incredible giving. Not only the poor but

a few rare souls among the rich are included.

In the Middle Ages, Francis of Assisi abandoned wealth and ease to help the poor.

In modern times we have the example of Charles T. Studd, famous cricket player who was used to all the luxuries enjoyed by rich English families of the Victorian Age. The nation was already astonished at the young man's going to China as a missionary. Imagine their amazement when news came from over there that C. T. Studd had given away his entire fortune!

It was on his 25th birthday that "C.T." had received his sizeable inheritance. He went to a consul to draw up the needed document. The official looked at the paper in disbelief and declared, "I won't sign it." But the youth of fervent spirit insisted. After two weeks the signature was obtained, and he gave away every bit of the 40,000 pounds—an amount equivalent to \$1,000,000 in today's purchasing power.

Thus the delighted donor helped establish Moody Bible Institute, enlarged the scope of George Mueller's missionary and orphanage work, relieved the needs of the poor in London, and enabled 50 Salvation Army officers to go to India. To the end of his life he enjoyed immense satisfaction from what he had done.

More recently there was Robert G. LeTourneau, manufacturer of earth-moving equipment, who for years gladly put 90% of his earnings into a fund for kingdom use. He was a radiant person.

Today there is Stanley Tam of Lima, Ohio, silver refiner and maker of plastics products, who has turned his entire business over to the Lord and takes only enough salary to provide himself and his wife a modest livelihood. He is one of the happiest men I have ever known.

I myself have been agreeably surprised in recent years. I had supposed that with retirement I would have to curtail my benevolences. On the contrary, God enables me to give more than ever!

The prudent of this world will always caution disciples of Christ about "giving too much." But there will continue to be an inner circle who insist on giving "beyond their ability" to the tune of joy which flows like a river. How about joining them?

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Evangelical Visitor

Church News

Births

Boll: Rodney Jay, born July 26, to Jay and Lois Boll, Manheim congregation, Pa.

College: Todd Willis, born July 16, to Steve and Marlene College, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Dougherty: Regina Marie, born July 11, to James and Linda Dougherty, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Flick: Christian Joy, born July 3, to Bill and Opal Flick, Rosebank congregation, Ks.

Geedey: Marianne Joy, born June 12, to Don and Malinda Geedey, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Gray: Rachel Leah, born July 6, to Don and Debbie Gray, Fairview congregation, Oh.

Hoover: Linda Beth, born June 28, to Richard and Pat Hoover, Sherkston congregation, Ont.

Keefer: Megan Renee, born June 26, to Kenneth and Nancy Keefer, Free Grace congregation, Pa.

Minor: Elizabeth Jean, born June 23, to Jim and Wendy Minor, Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

Poe: Justin Scott, born July 4, to Jay and Nina Poe, Carlisle congregation, Pa.

Ricchi: Andrew Paul, born July 15, to Mark and Sherri Ricchi, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Ruegg: John Sanford, born July 15, to Randy and Sandra Ruegg, Sherkston congregation, Ont.

Sabo: Daryl Rodney, born June 27, to Gerald and Bonnie Sabo, Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

Sider: Crystal Dawn, born June 26, to Vance and Judy Sider, Sherkston congregation, Ont.

Stayman: Keith Lynn, born July 11, to Richard and Colleen Stayman, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Sollenberger-Charles: Karen L., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. Blaine Charles, Lancaster, Pa., and Carl R., son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Sollenberger, Blue Ball, Pa., July 12, in the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. James P. Nolten, brother-in-law of the bride, and Rev. John B. Hawbaker officiating.

ROXBURY REPORT

John Hawbaker

Against the background of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, the Roxbury Holiness Camp was held July 30 to August 10. The theme was "The Poured Out Spirit," and a keynote message on this subject was given by the Camp Director John Hawbaker.

The Camp included fine biblical preaching in a variety of styles and presentations; enthusiastic singing led by Eugene Heidler; music ministries of excellent quality and spiritual sensitivity by the Elwood Wingert Family (Antrim Church); and numerous testimonies of conversion, revival and entire sanctification.

Dr. Albert Lown of England and Rev. Wilbur Benner of Greencastle, PA, were the co-evangelists. Other guest speakers included John Lockwood, Missionary Church pastor from Xenia, Ohio; and Dr. Arthur Climenhaga.

The children learned about various animals in the Bible and lessons God teaches us through the animals. The theme was "All God's Creatures" with sessions directed by Ken and Audrey Brubaker. A barn swallow and piglet were some of the animals that were brought alive to the children's camp. Also, a 55 inch black snake killed on the grounds was hung on a pole to illustrate Moses' lifting up the serpent in the wilderness.

"Youth Alive" was the theme chosen by Carl Rosenberry for the Teen Camp. The teens were indeed alive as they worshipped God, sang choruses vigorously, had fervent prayer times, and were an important part of the prayer ministry as people prayed at the altar in the evening services.

A new facility for this year's camp was the newly expanded and renovated nursery building, now adequate to serve the needs of infants and toddlers.

Sports competition between the teenagers and the ministers has long been a part of Roxbury Camp. But a new element was added this year with a tug of war across the deepest part of the stream, witnessed by a crowd of 300 or more people of all ages who followed the trails through the woods to get to the site of the event. After straining valiantly to maintain their footing, the men were tumbled into the creek, the camp director being the first to get soaked, much to the delight of the spectators.

The 1981 Camp will convene July 29 to August 9. Evangelists will be Dr. Dennis Kinlaw, President of Asbury College, Wilmore, KY; and Rev. Luke Keefer, Jr.

Worley-Shafer: Bernice Elaine, daughter of Bishop and Mrs. R. Donald Shafer, Upland, Ca., and Robert Lee Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Worley, Alta Loma, Ca., June 21, in the Upland Brethren in Christ Church with father of the bride and L. G. Engle, uncle of the bride, officiating.

Obituaries

Heisey: Mahlon C. Heisey, Elizabethtown, Pa., born July 6, 1900, died June 8, 1980, in the Milton Hershey Medical Center. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Martha Hunt Heisey; two daughters: Mrs. Dorothy Royer and Mrs. Mary Myers; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. He was a member of the Shenks Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral service was conducted in the Shenks Church by Rev. Isaac Kanode. Interment was in the Crossroads Cemetery.

Klamm: Grace M. Klamm, Abilene, Ks., born December 8, 1901, died July 28, 1980. The daughter of Jacob and Emma Longnecker, she was married to William Klamm, who preceded her in death in February 1953. A member of the Abilene Brethren in Christ Church, she was preceded in death by three brothers and four sisters and survived by one stepson, Orville Klamm; and one sister. Funeral services were held in the Danner Funeral

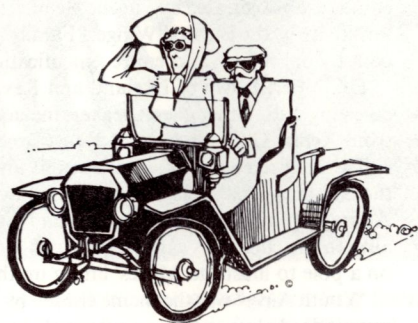
Home with Rev. Henry F. Landis officiating. Interment was in the Abilene Cemetery. Memorial contributions are being sent to the Navajo Brethren in Christ Mission.

Oldham: Clement I. Oldham, born June 21, 1906 in Napier Twp., Pa., died July 27, 1980. He was the son of Emanuel and Margaret (Miller) Oldham. He is survived by his wife, Catharine Myers Oldham. Also surviving are four children: John, Ralph, Glenn and Ruth; a foster daughter, Anna Mae; ten grandchildren; and a brother. He was preceded in death by four brothers. He was a member of the Spring Hope Brethren in Christ Church where he served as a deacon for 35 years. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Kenneth Mackie and Rev. Samuel K. Oldham. Interment was in the Fishertown Cemetery.

Wanner: Marvin C. Wanner, Millersville, Pa., died July 19, 1980, at the age of 49. He was the son of Harry G. Wanner and the late Mary Cunningham Wanner. He is survived by his wife, Arlene Ober Ruhl Wanner; two sons; two daughters; a stepson; three brothers; and five sisters. He recently accepted the Lord and became a member of the Lancaster Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Merle Brubaker. Interment was in the Weaverland Mennonite Cemetery.



Shifting Gears



by Leoda Buckwalter

Tucked away in my memory are some very juicy stories about my learning to drive a car about forty-three years ago! It seemed to work as an immunization, for I have never desired to follow through on it—due, perhaps, to the fact that my husband, Allen Buckwalter, is an excellent driver, and also due to our living in India since 1939 (furloughs excepted). That's a long time!

Delhi traffic can be very chaotic, with assured young Punjabis weaving their way through, desperately gaining a car's length in this mad race to "be somebody". . . .

My steady, alert husband drives our car through all the mad jostling, educating me on good road etiquette . . . and keeping an eye on the other fellow all the time. I note that often he needs to shift gears. It just makes sense!

Come to think of it, that's what we have done all over again. After forty years as missionary appointees, we have shifted gears to come under the category of "missionary associates."

What is so magical about the age 65? Is it because it represents a life nearing completion, even as 21 indicates the opening door of responsible adulthood? Whatever its implications, both Allen and I have now passed this milestone. We also passed the forty year mark since we first came to India as missionaries. We have seen the passing of the British Raj, the birth of the Republic of India, the ebb and flow of politics sometimes played in high

drama, the ongoing of a civilization which continues to adapt somehow or other to circumstances which would kill the best of us. We have watched an industrial revolution bring precision-made Indian watches onto world markets! Cloth, fashions, costume jewelry follow in their wake, just to mention a few items you can find anywhere around the world marked, MADE IN INDIA.

When we arrived in North Bihar in 1939, there was scarcely one macadamized road. We lived without electricity, rode bullock-carts and bicycles. I rode a trusty mountain pony over the trails in and around Barjora Mission and earned the name "the flying Memsahib" . . . because Furioso galloped instead of mincing along as did the "tuttoo ponies" of the locality.

Those were the days in which we bought eight seers of milk to the rupee, and paid Rs. 12/-for 2½ maunds of rice! But I can reach back even further . . . to the days of my childhood, when Daddy (Henry L. Smith) paid off the workers from baskets of kauri shells. The shells were legal tender, buying the staples and needs of the common man. The kauri shells have gone. Inflation has come to India, even as it has to the entire world. Prices continue soaring while all of us wonder where it will all end.

Lights glow throughout the villages and towns of North Bihar, at least intermittently! The little Middle-

continued on page 11



The east coast of Nicaragua, Department of Zelaya on the map, is a rugged, mountainous jungle area. Billboards along the highway call it an "awakening giant." If this is true, it is because hardy people have taken the government's offer of cheap land and have moved into the area to better themselves. When you consider that access to this territory is possible only through hours of uncomfortable travel by small motorized dug-out boat, horseback and walking, you can realize the true pioneering spirit of these people.

In this area the Brethren in Christ Church has at least six preaching points. The story of this work centers around José Leon Herrera, a slightly stooped man, about fifty, who is seldom seen without a guitar.

Some years ago José went to Florida on a tourist visa intending to stay to work as an illegal alien. He describes himself, at this time, as a man deep in sin. Though he had a Catholic background, the teachings of the church meant little to him and his appetites were satisfied with no regard to God.

Work was available and his papers were finally legalized after being apprehended by the law. He was beginning to succeed financially and had prospects of accumulating the "good things" of life when a friend invited him to an evangelical church service. The Holy Spirit convicted him and the old José was gone forever.

When he accepted Christ, José de-

Evangelical Visitor

José Leon Herrera with his wife at 1980
Annual Conference of the Nicaragua
church.

Missionary to the Awakening Giant

by Elsie Bechtel

cided immediately to go the whole way with Him and made a complete dedication of his life. Soon he felt God calling him back to Nicaragua to witness for Christ. Leaving what he once thought were the important things of this life he came to Managua. Seeing so many churches here in the city he felt he was needed in rural areas. That he chose the most difficult rural section tells you something about the character of José.

He decided to combine his ability as a businessman with evangelism. So he took into the area supplies needed by the farmers and brought back products they had to sell. As he conducted his business he told them about Christ. His ministry was fruitful and after a year he had four homes where people came to worship.

José began to realize a need for these people to be identified with a larger body of believers. After becoming friends with a Brethren in Christ pastor in Managua he asked permission for this work to come under the auspices of the Nicaraguan Brethren in Christ Church.

This gives background information about Brethren in Christ involvement in Zelaya. What about the man behind the work?

José spends half his time working the area—two and one-half weeks at home, two and one-half weeks traveling. This sounds like a simple schedule but, considering the difficulties and distress of travel, it is a marvel of phys-

ical endurance. Travel can often mean becoming soaked by the tropical rains, crossing flooded creeks by foot, or just being worried that your horse doesn't lose his footing in the constant mud holes and break a leg—or worse, break the rider's.

Also it is a demonstration of spiritual vitality, for each night is spent in a worship service. At some places, where people are established in their faith, José takes the role of an uplifter and an encourager to the brothers and sisters. In other areas he is the evangelist bringing the message of Christ.

When the service is over José does not find a comfortable mattress waiting for him. He sleeps on whatever is available—a hammock, canvas cot, or wooden bench. Early the next morning he is on his way like an itinerant missionary, spreading the good news as he works. Recently, while riding through mud up to the horse's chest, he told Chuck Musser that what we suffer here for Christ is nothing compared to what Christ suffered for us. This is not just mouthing an idea, for José has dedicated his whole life to God.

While José has the capacity and resourcefulness to accumulate money, he puts his gain into the work of the Lord by buying accordians, megaphones, and guitars for use by the worship groups. He says he prefers to lay up treasures in heaven rather than accumulate property.

The people respond to this devotion

by giving him their trust and friendship. He is on a first name basis with Christians and non-Christians alike. When he has a service, fifty to seventy-five people gather although it requires walking an hour or two through jungle and staying overnight, sleeping on a wooden bench, before returning home early in the morning. More preaching points are being started, which shows the work is growing.

José feels responsible for the physical needs of his flock also. When they needed beans for planting he was persistent, almost becoming a bother, until he succeeded in getting them through the Mennonite Central Committee. Now he is pooling resources for a vaccination program for this rural area which has no medical attention. It is almost certain José will accomplish his plans because of his determination to help his people.

Waiting for José when he returns home are an attractive wife and two children. They fully support José in his work. Right now he is troubled by a bad leg. The doctor insists that he needs a month's rest with no walking—something José is reluctant to do because he feels his brothers need him.

This is a picture of a man who has been chosen by God and gifted by the Holy Spirit to carry on a work that is difficult and demanding. Pray for José and his people that God would continue to receive glory from their lives.

Elsie Bechtel, Canton, Ohio, is in her second year of voluntary service in Nicaragua.



Emmanuel Hembrom and Panuel Murmu (front row) in class at Banmankhi. Site of a mission station opening in 1949, today Banmankhi is the center for leadership training by the India church.

Three Bible students at Banmankhi, North Bihar, tell about their conversions. Translated by John R. Sider.

Testimonies from North Bihar

PANUEL MURMU:

"I am Panuel Murmu, 22 years old. I was from the high class of tribals. My father was the village head and controlled the affairs of the entire village. Then Father became very sick. We spent Rs. 3000/- (\$375) in doctor's fees but Father was no better. After that we had the witch doctor offer sacrifices of sheep and goats, but that did no good. He was sick for two years.

"When he was near death, one day I saw a vision in which a man appeared who began to talk with me. He told me that no matter how many doctors or witch doctors I consulted, Father would not get better. Then I asked him what I should do.

"He told me that when our entire family began to follow Jesus my father would be healed. I replied, 'Oh Lord, when my father gets better then I will give land for a church.' Then he told me that the next day at 8:00 my father motioned that he wanted to go outside, which he did. We helped him outside and gave him water to wash his mouth and then food to eat.

"On the third day, Father took a few faltering steps himself. That day I called my family and told them the vision and said that it was on that account my father was healed. Having heard of the vision and seen Father's healing, our entire family believed and according to the promise we gave 10 kuttas of land to build a church. Our entire family began to attend church and about six months later we were baptized. We first built a bamboo and thatch church where there is now a brick church."

JOEL MARANDI:

"I came to accept Jesus Christ in this way. My sister was sick with a sickness that spread throughout her whole body. We went to the doctor and got several kinds of medicine but no relief came. Afterwards we went to the witch doctor who asked for two bottles of beer, one sari, and a pair of pigeons and promised that she would recover. We gave all that but no relief came. We all thought about becoming Christians. That night I had a dream (vision) in which I saw such a brilliant light from heaven that I wondered in my dream what would happen.

"In the morning when I awoke I told my family that God was speaking to us. We all began to attend church. God spoke to us again in dreams and we became Christians. We became Christians after my sister died. The night she died there was a terrible lightning storm. Since we became Christians our work has gone well."

EMMANUEL HEMBROM:

"In 1972, when I was twenty, my father was a Hindu priest. Every day he worshipped the god Shankar. I was also included in worship. When I was in my last year of high school an Operation Mobilization team came near the school. They gave me a little booklet, 'He Wants to Be Your Friend.' I read this booklet very eagerly. The teacher, having seen this, became very upset. He said, 'This is a foreign religion. You should not read it.' Anyway, I put it in my shoulder bag.

"One time when I was at home a

guest came to my place. He was possessed by an evil spirit. It overcame him at any time of the night and shook his body. He constantly cried out, 'Save me, save me.' I didn't know that he had such an evil spirit. That night he slept at my house. There was no one else there. At midnight the evil spirit came on him and convulsed him. He cried out, 'Save me, save me.' I was afraid—what should I do? Then I remembered that the small booklet had said that the Lord Jesus raised the dead. I didn't know how to pray. I said only, 'If the Lord Jesus Christ is really all powerful then He will heal this person right now.' Having said this I placed my hand over that person. Immediately he was healed and sat up.

"My amazement knew no bounds. I promised that I would accept the Lord Jesus Christ. I began to meet with a Christian family and they taught me how to pray. I began to attend church in the village of Sukhasan. On the 15th of June, 1973, Rev. Benjamin Marandi baptized me at Banmankhi. When I was baptized, my mother, father, brothers, and sisters all were upset (angry) at me. They decided to put me out of the house. On the 20th of June 1973 my father called a *panchayat* (village council). People came together and questioned me. I remained in Christ. They witnessed against me. I answered that under no conditions whatsoever could I leave Jesus Christ, even if it meant my death. Having said that much, my older brother ran to beat me with his stick.

"But people stopped him from doing it. Through the people I was told to leave, but my mother began to weep and she stopped me from going. I pray regularly for my parents and brothers!

"The Lord Jesus has made me strong and firm through His Word. Through this my education was finished (stopped) but God called me to help in His work. Since 1975 I have preached with the youth group. I thank God that He has kept me from various false ways. I am in His care. But I am sorry because my parents are still in sin. 'Oh Lord, open their hearts that they may recognize the true God.'"

MCC NEWS

Speakers Available on "Living More With Less"

Living More With Less by Doris Janzen Longacre, the sequel to the *More-With-Less Cookbook* by the same author, contains many practical suggestions for how to live joyfully while simplifying life style and caring deeply for the needs of others in the world. The book was released for sale in August.

Mennonite Central Committee, which sponsored writing of *Living More With Less*, has organized a group of speakers and resource people available to lead workshops on themes concerning responsible living. These approximately 35 men and women were chosen from throughout Canada and the United States, to be available to as many communities as possible.

Some communities have already planned workshops and are encouraging congregations to use the book in its educational programs. Others may wish to wait until early 1981 to plan such workshops, when a study guide will be available. MCC will also provide written suggestions for groups planning their own workshops and has available cassette tapes on the theme for workshop or individual use.

Paul Longacre, MCC secretary for Food and Hunger Concerns, noted that these aids will assist individual congregations to "study the book using their own resources. The MCC people are available to help congregations plan, but the book lends itself to a wide variety of study possibilities." Men's and women's groups, youth groups, Sunday schools and house fellowships are among groups which may choose to use the book.

Resource persons are not experts in the field of "Living More With Less," but are church people with a concern in this area who are willing to share ideas for growth.

One available leader, Herta Janzen of Winnipeg, Man., noted that, "I take this assignment as a struggler. I do not feel I could make a presentation that gives pat answers. I am hoping *Living More With Less* can be portrayed as a celebration of life rather than a drudgery of cutting back."

Another resource person, Carol Braun of Reedley, Calif., noted: "It is with a great deal of humility that I accept this assignment. I do struggle with responsible living in our affluent society. Solutions are hard to find and even harder to implement. But I view such an assignment as a growing experience and an opportunity to learn from others."

Responding to Hurricane Allen

The "strongest hurricane of the century," Hurricane Allen, left its mark of destruction as it ravaged crops, properties and killed people in Haiti, Jamaica and St. Lucia of the Caribbean Islands, August 2 to 9.

Although the devastation was much less than expected, in areas hit it has caused genuine loss and grief. Of the three islands named, St. Lucia suffered the most property damage and in Haiti 41 were killed.

From Haiti, MCCer Walter Sawatsky of La Junta, Col., reported that damage in Port-au-Prince was slight, but in the southwestern peninsula, extensive damage was done to the trees and coffee crops. Between five and ten percent of the homes in that area are damaged.

MCC is preparing to assist churches related

to the Worldteam Mission (formerly West Indies Mission) in Haiti. MCC would, through them, help set up home repair projects and food distribution.

Telex reports from the Caribbean Conference of Churches indicate that the most seriously damaged areas of Jamaica are in the northeastern part of the island. Eight deaths have been reported there. On August 11 MCC Jamaica Country Representative Sam Lapp of Lansdale, Pa., called from Jamaica and reported that 4,000 people had to leave their damaged or destroyed homes. The government estimates that agricultural damage stands at \$45 million.

MCC is discussing plans to assist the Jamaica Mennonite Church in organizing and supporting cleanup crews and to be ready to help organize a major reconstruction program if necessary. Expatriate workers probably will not be needed in MCC's part of the coordinated response to the hurricane in Jamaica.

MCC is also responding to the havoc of Hurricane Allen in the United States. Mennonite Disaster Service is sending crews of workers from Region III states into southern Texas. Cleanup operations there have already begun.

Shifting Gears

from page 8

English School which my parents opened is now a sizable government college in Saharsa. Airport facilities are even there!

We have witnessed other changes—the birth of the church among the Santals and the Uraons, the coming of Christian radio to India, evidences of a great spiritual hunger throughout this land, fed no doubt by the daily Christian broadcasts which now come from two FEBA stations (Seychelles and Manila), three Trans World Radio stations (Ceylon, Bonaire and Guam) and the Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon. Our last twenty years have been intertwined with this great task of presenting Jesus Christ to a needy world by means of radio. Now, they tell us, it's time to retire!

Normally we would do it in the traditional manner—go back to our homeland and find something to do there. But the Lord of the harvest had other plans for us, plans which continually amaze us. Our local church in Delhi asked for Allen's services as Assistant to the Pastor. This now places us in the office of the INDIAN WITNESS (a nationally known Christian magazine) about six hours a day. Allen serves in the pulpit with Dr.

Smyth every Sunday. I remain at the piano, even as I have done for the eleven years we've lived in Delhi. Home visitation and Bible studies are opening to us, and we find ourselves challenged to enfold with Christ's love those who need us. For in this large city of six million there are very few churches! Less than a dozen of these cater to the spiritual needs of Indian Christians who come from all over India to work in the capital city. The church in which we worship, Centenary Church, has two congregations—one meeting in Hidustani, the other in English. We work with the latter.

Although we are no longer FEBA-Staff members, our concern remains, and our interest leads to continued involvement. Allen serves on the Managing Committee, as in past years, and I record my piano program, KEYBOARD MELODIES, now over the 500 mark and on consecutively for the past fifteen years. It will discontinue from September of this year. Great cause for joy is the fine Indian Leadership which the Lord has given to FEBA-India. We praise Him.

Yes, we've shifted gears but, believe me, we're still on the road, and enjoying it!

Christian Education in New Mexico

Part I: Working Together

The Concern

It started with a concern to upgrade congregational and mission teaching ministries, so that even in isolated circumstances, the Brethren in Christ in New Mexico can maintain and share the church's biblical values.

The Outcome

A request was sent to the Board of Christian Education to send one of its national directors, Winifred Swalm, to spend seven days in New Mexico in early May. With Winnie as a primary resource person local leaders planned a full week of workshops and consultations, involving each of the three congregations in the state and culminating in a weekend conference for all the Brethren in Christ in New Mexico.

Teacher Training and Consultation in Sandia

Mrs. Swalm arrived in New Mexico on May 5 to spend time, first, with the Sandia congregation in Albuquerque. Elsie Bohrer, the congregation's Director of Christian Education, had requested teacher training and consultation services. That evening Winnie presented a workshop to the Sunday School teachers, "Using Curriculum and Teaching Effectively," and at a luncheon the following day met with Christian Education leaders of the congregation for consultation. Two questions were uppermost in the minds of the Sandia leaders: How can we provide a good Sunday school experience with just a few children in each class? How can we respond to the

request of our young adults for elective classes in the Sunday school?

With Winnie's help, the luncheon group worked out a way to develop adult elective classes. Then the conversation shifted to the children. As Elsie describes the meeting, she and the other leaders were frustrated by the difficulties they face. The group talked and struggled together until a "breakthrough" came with Winnie's suggestion to consider Creative Learning Centers. In Elsie's telling, the group was soon talking with enthusiasm and hope about using Creative Learning Centers as a way to offer effective learning opportunities in a small Sunday school—and as an idea that is "just right" for Sandia. She and the others left the meeting infused with excitement and anticipation. Were Winnie's services helpful? "Very definitely!" responds Elsie.

Professional Evaluation in the Mission School

Leaving Albuquerque on Tuesday evening, May 6, Winnie traveled three hours to the Navajo Mission. Here, at the request of the school staff, Winnie drew upon her experience of 23 years of teaching and administration in public education to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's use of the *Foundation Series* as its Bible curriculum, the overall program of Christian education, and the basic academic program.

Through Wednesday and Thursday Winnie observed, as inconspicuously as possible, among curious children! She sat quietly in the back at chapel



The Farmington Bible Study group is IN THE WORLD FOR JESUS but says, "We are concerned for the faith of our children." Here the group leads the New Mexico conference in singing Scripture choruses.

Mexico

by Warren Hoffman

services, slipped into classrooms to listen to devotions and lessons, and even joined the children for breakfast and lunch meals.

On Friday Winnie met with the staff for a full day to present her evaluation. "So much can be done with the *Foundation Series* in a mission school where you are with children five days a week," Winnie said, "And especially in the Navajo culture where children learn so much with their hands." She suggested that teachers plan in units of four lessons, looking for ways to integrate *Foundation Series* activities into the whole of the school day—in art and music lessons, language arts, morning devotions, and on bulletin boards. The attractiveness of Winnie's suggestion, the principal observed, is that "there is more planning, but no more work!" Without taking any more classtime, Christian nurture and witness—the heart of the mission school's ministry—will permeate more areas of the school day. Thanks to Winnie's counsel, the school's objective to introduce children to the Christian faith will be much more deeply achieved.

The school staff dispersed that day with gratitude to a Board of Christian Education which can provide, through the services of its directors, resources to meet even the typical situations of Christian Education across the brotherhood. "I feel that we have learned much from Winnie's observations, affirmation, and suggestions," comments Glenace Frey, the first and second grade teacher. Marilyn Wingert, a reading aide, adds, "Winnie gave many

September 10, 1980

Executive Director Appointed by Board of Christian Education



Winifred Swalm, Duntroon, Ont., Canada, assumes the position of Executive Director of Christian Education for the Brethren in Christ Church with duties beginning August 1, 1980. Winnie has served for the past year on a shared basis as Associate Director for the General Conference and as Director for the Canadian Conference. She will serve from her office in Collingwood, where her husband Ray teaches school. Ray and Winnie have three adult children.

helpful ideas for developing different areas of our school. I'm really encouraged!"

With the Mission Staff

The school staff was not alone in benefitting from Winnie's services through those three days. On Wednesday evening Winnie spoke for the benefit of the entire mission staff on the subject, "Universal Principles of Teaching which Apply Across Cultures."

With the Bible Study Group in Farmington

On Thursday evening she traveled, yet another hour away, to Farmington, to meet with a Bible study group with aspirations toward full congregational life. In response to their questions, Winnie suggested ways that a developing fellowship can provide teaching and nurture for children. Almost as an incidental bonus, Winnie shared helpfully and specifically of her

faith-growing experience as a participant in an interdenominational Bible study group and from practical wisdom gained in the New Life Brethren in Christ Church in Collingwood, a congregation which has travelled and is travelling a somewhat similar path.

An Experience in Working Together

Such a beautiful experience of working together for a cause that, in itself, motivates Christians to serve, to ask for help, to improve techniques, to be courageous enough to be evaluated!

PART 2 will appear in the September 25 *Visitor*.

Warren Hoffman has served as principal and pastor of Navajo Mission School. He also serves as secretary of the denomination's Board of Christian Education.

Conference News

Allegheny

The Cedar Grove congregation reports 23 persons were baptized on Sunday, July 20. • A farewell service was held for the Marshall Poe family by the Chambersburg congregation on Sunday evening, July 27. The Poes are preparing for service in Nicaragua. • The Jemison Valley congregation held a baptismal service for six persons on Sunday, July 27.

Several Sunday evening programs were planned by the youth of the Locust Grove congregation recently. They included several films and a youth chorus from the Grantham congregation. • Mary Leister, president of the Spring Hope Christ's Crusaders, was recently selected as Bedford County Junior Miss. In addition to her many school activities, Mary sings in the church quartet.

Atlantic

A missions/evangelism rally was held on Thursday evening, September 4, by the Cross Roads congregation. A team of young people from four African countries, the "Liberation," shared in the rally. • The Greg Funks were installed as the pastoral couple of the Maytown congregation on Sunday, August 3, by Bishop John Byers. A fellowship meal was held on Sunday evening, August 24, to welcome the Funks.

A Family Life Conference was held by the Mt. Pleasant congregation on July 25-27. Rev. John Drescher was the resource person. • The John Brubaker family was welcomed as the pastoral family by the Refton congregation on Sunday, August 17. Installation was held in the morning service and an informal time of getting to know the Brubakers was held in the evening. A "family scrapbook" was presented to the new pastoral family to help them become acquainted with the congregation.

Canadian

Nine persons from the Sherston congregation were baptized on Sunday evening, July 27. Arthur Pye also gave a presentation on Niagara House, the proposed retirement centre. • The young people of the Wainfleet congregation shared in testimony and song for the vesper service held on Sunday evening, July 27. The pastor, Roy Peterman, brought the message. • The Westheights congregation recently received six persons into fellowship.

Central

The Bethel Community congregation hosted an outdoor fellowship for the Union Grove congregation on Sunday evening, August 24. A devotional time was held following the recreation. • Dave and Florence Carlson, missionaries with Trans World Radio, shared in the Sunday School hour and the morning worship service of the Lakeview congregation on Sunday, August 3. • The Larry Steffee family was installed as the pastoral family of the Pomeroy Chapel congregation on Sunday, August 17. Bishop David Climenhaga was in charge of the service.

Midwest

"Friendship Ministries" presented special music for the Mountain View congregation on Sunday morning, July 20. The director of the group, Bob Miller, brought the message. • On July 26 and 27, Dr. Stanley Banks from England shared his Bible teaching with the Rosebank congregation.

Pacific

The "Joyful Noise," a family from the Chino congregation, presented the Sunday evening service to the Alta Loma congregation on August 3. • A Kid's Crusade was held on August 26-28 by the Labish congregation. Tuvalu, the clown, shared the Good News of Christ with the girls and boys.

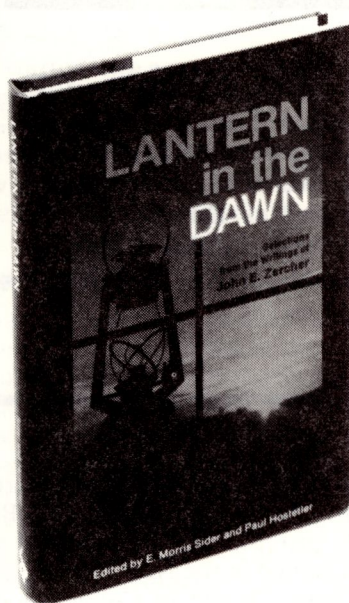
Mother Teresa Visits N.Y., Dedicates New Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa, on her first visit to the United States since receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, made a quiet four-day visit to her sisters in the South Bronx and opened another soup kitchen. The Missionaries' New York house, the first in this country, was started in 1971. Others were opened last year in Detroit and St. Louis.

Mother Teresa got a laugh when she told the worshippers, most of them black, that someone had asked her what she would do if there were no more poor people in the world and she retorted, "We'd be unemployed."

Spiritual poverty is the most pressing problem in the United States, Mother Teresa said. She said the sick poor whom her sisters visit each week are alone and in fear. "We are not meant to be like that," she added.

Evangelical Visitor



LANTERN in the DAWN

Selections from The Writings of John E. Zercher editor of The VISITOR from 1967 to 1979

"This is not a book to be read and then put aside, but to be read and re-read. I am enjoying reading one editorial a day and seeking to apply those insights to my life. Every family should have LANTERN IN THE DAWN in their library."

—Velma Heisey

LANTERN IN THE DAWN, edited by E. Morris Sider & Paul Hostetler. Available for \$9.95 from Christian Light Bookstores and Evangel Press.

A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep

I watched a parable on educational television the other night. The program traced life in the Kalahari Desert in Botswana, southern Africa. Flying over the desert in the rainy season, the camera crew recorded vast expanses of water—lakes that extended for miles and miles. Surely there would be ample water in those lakes to sustain life during the following dry season. But just a few short months later, the same flight revealed nothing but parched, cracking lake beds and thirsty animals. Those vast lakes had been only inches deep.

The Kalahari lakes reminded me of an earlier conversation with John. He was describing the reception his family had experienced as they visited a growing church in the area. "The first Sunday we were welcomed warmly. All the visitors (and there were many) were introduced. That week we were contacted by someone from the church. The next Sunday we again received the royal welcome, and were invited to worship there regularly. We thought, 'Here is a church that knows how to make people feel at home and is doing a good job of incorporating them into the fellowship.'"

But as the weeks turned into months and soon became a year, John and his family experienced a growing disenchantment. "Once we were no longer visitors, we disappeared into the crowds. There was little attempt to build meaningful relationships between people. If we missed services because of illness, no one called to see what had happened. When we started to attend a nearby Brethren in Christ congregation, apparently no one missed us at the other church for months. Their program for welcoming and following up new members is a mile wide and an inch deep."

"A mile wide and an inch deep." What other ways (in addition to the question of welcoming new members into the congregation) can this phrase apply to our lives as Christians?

Jesus talked of persons who heard the Good News

and received it gladly, but continued in the faith for only a short time. The reason—their "spiritual roots" were too shallow. The "soil" was only inches deep; below that was solid rock which would not support life. (See Matthew 13:1-23 for the whole story.)

We need to cultivate a healthy broadness in our spiritual understanding. As maturing Christians we can listen with appreciation to divergent opinions and respect, even accept, brothers and sisters whose understanding of faith is a bit different than our own. But at the same time we have the responsibility to put our roots down deep into God's Word through disciplined study, prayer, and sharing with other believers. "A mile wide"—by all means; but not just "an inch deep."

And what of our relationships with other members of the body of Christ? These, too, tend to be very broad. We are all very polite with one another. Smiles and handshakes are standard procedure before and after church services. We take care not to offend one another. I've known of people even "shading the truth" in order not to hurt someone else's feelings.

But how deep, how genuine, is our love for each other? Recently a couple confided that the small group of which they have been a part spends a good deal of time "cutting people down rather than building people up." And don't we too frequently find it easier to pull away from people who are wrestling with difficult problems in their lives instead of enfolding them with sensitive love and concern? Our commitment to each other—only an inch deep?

"A mile wide and an inch deep." I'll stop with my list and let you think of some applications of your own. (That's called "reader involvement.") If you want to jot them down and send them in, I would be happy to read them . . . might even incorporate them into a future *Visitor*.

G



MASTER COMPUTER

Philip E. Beck, Sr.

Computers are in general use throughout the world these days and have been responsible for many accomplishments in recent years. One of the greatest of these accomplishments has been the placing of men on the moon. Computers have played a large part in the development of the technology required to do this marvelous feat. Computers have been used to direct and guide the missiles to their destination and also in the function of the guidance mechanism aboard the individual vehicles. The computer has done wonders.

Computers are being used very extensively in business. They have replaced many instruments for the calculations required for many, many mathematical problems. We used the slide rule, but the slide rule has become more or less obsolescent since computers are available in small pocket size, and for many other purposes. The operation of vehicles is being controlled by computers. Lights can be turned on or off depending on desired conditions. Emission systems are being controlled by computers these days; and the computer has many other uses.

As we are becoming more knowledgeable, and since many people are learning more and more about the use of computers, it has brought my attention to the greatest computer of all—incomparable with anything manmade—that is, the computer that God has used to direct the body that we call the brain.

Computers are measured by bits of information that can be stored. The amount of data that can be stored in the human brain has been estimated to be a million billion bits of information. This is a figure of a quadrillion, or 1 and 15 zeros following. The brain, in the function of recognizing a friend or

other personage, is estimated to require about 1 million bits of information.

All computers are controlled by what is known as a programmer who determines what function the computer is to perform. It then provides the information as dictated by the programmer. With the human brain of the Christian I consider the programmer to be the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in conjunction with the soul of the individual involved determines what information is stored in the brain. As a Programmer, He recalls and also mandates the functions of various body senses. He has control of all the thoughts, deeds and actions that are performed by the body.

The Holy Spirit also has a function that acts as a connection between the individual and the Master Computer of the Universe. One idea that has come to my mind is that the Master Computer of the Universe is the greatest of all. However, there is no limit to His capacity. Like space, which has no dimension, no end, so the Master Computer of the Universe has a capacity which has no end, is unlimited. So all the information pertaining to the aforementioned functions of acts, deeds, and thoughts is recorded in a Master Computer for future reference at the Judgment Day or at any other time the Lord may dictate.

This concept is a new line of thought pertaining to our relationship with God. Many of our acts and deeds are performed with the idea that they may not be known, but the function of the Holy Spirit as a Programmer is unceasing and unending, and covers everything that we do, say, and think.

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